

MINUTES – JULY 19, 2004

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at the Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 19, 2004. Members present: Larry G. Hamlett, Vice-Chairman, Jack W. Hooper, Cathy W. Lucas, Kenneth D. Travis, and George W. Ward, Jr. Absent: Mel O. Battle and Nathaniel Hall. Also present: Jeffrey H. Earp, County Manager, Robert V. Shaver, Jr., County Attorney, Gordon Bendall representing The Caswell Messenger, and Billy Baker and Lauren Chesnut representing The Danville Register & Bee. Wanda P. Smith, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

Vice-Chairman Hamlett presided over the meeting.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

Vice-Chairman Hamlett opened the meeting with a Moment of Silent Prayer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chairman Hamlett announced that he would like to remove Agenda Item No. 9, Request from Aging Services, from the agenda since Ms. Kim Dawkins-Berry could not be present.

Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Lucas to approve the agenda as presented with the deletion of Item No. 9. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Ward moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:

- 1) Approval of Minutes of May 17, 24, & June 3, 2004 Meetings

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice-Chairman Hamlett opened the floor for public comments.

Ms. Susan Hall, 712 Hatchett Road, Yanceyville, came before the Board and stated that the County may inadvertently get caught up in a harassment lawsuit with them. Ms. Hall added that her husband operates D&S Auto Service on Hatchett Road and they reside on the property. Ms. Hall stated that neighbors purchased property behind them and before their home was even built, started calling the County Planner. Ms. Hall added that the Board has inadvertently gotten mixed up in a personal issue. Ms. Hall informed the

Board that their neighbors have called law enforcement on them three times, which is a waste of their time. Ms. Hall stated that the Planner's time is also being wasted and every time he comes out, they have been in compliance with the commercial part of the Junkyard Ordinance. Ms. Hall added that they are tired of being harassed by their neighbors, not just on this issue, but other issues as well. Ms. Hall stated that one thing she does not like is Commissioners getting involved in a personal issue. Ms. Hall added that they have also been told by their neighbors that they are violating the Noise Ordinance. Ms. Hall stated that they try to show their neighbors respect and would like for their neighbors to show them respect and stop harassing them. Ms. Hall informed the Board that the neighbors she is referring to is Debbie and Gary Chandler. Ms. Hall stated that they have owned this business for 20 years and have never had problems with their neighbors. Ms. Hall asked the Board members, as elected officials, to please not get involved in a personal issue. Ms. Hall stated that they intend to always comply with the Junkyard Ordinance, and no matter how much it changes they will be in compliance. Upon questioning from Commissioner Lucas, Ms. Hall answered that at least two Commissioners have told Mike Cusimano at least three times to come out to their property. Ms. Hall stated that all she is asking for is peace with her neighbors and the Commissioners as an elected Board.

Mr. Billy Baker, reporter representing The Danville Register & Bee came before the Board and stated that he would like to say good-bye to the Board since tonight would be the last meeting that he would cover the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Baker added that he has been covering the Board of Commissioners' meetings for two years. Mr. Baker thanked the Board and administrative staff for their assistance over the last two years. Mr. Baker introduced Ms. Lauren Chesnut, who would be his replacement from The Danville Register & Bee.

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED BUILDING INSPECTIONS ORDINANCE

Commissioner Hamlett moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis that the Board enter into a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed Building Inspections Ordinance and Fee Schedule. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Leonard McFarling, of Providence came before the Board and stated that he is owner and operator of Jim Millner Plumbing Co., Inc. Mr. McFarling added that he provides a service to his customers just like the Caswell County Inspections Department. Mr. McFarling stated that he does not mind the Fee Schedule, and has only one problem with the proposed Ordinance. Mr. McFarling added that he has one request and this concerns the AM and PM scheduling for inspections in the Ordinance. Mr. McFarling requested that the Board amend Section 2.5.C. of the proposed Ordinance to help the citizens and contractors of this County and get them a time limit within an hour or two for inspections. Mr. McFarling stated that it is costing not only him, but the homeowners and taxpayers when they have to wait hours for an Inspector to come and make an inspection.

Mr. Thomas Hoskins, of 198 Arch Cook Road, came before the Board and stated that he has been talking to a lot of people and some are really concerned about the Inspections Department because they call and ask questions and receive a very grumpy explanation. Mr. Hoskins added that a public office should not answer citizens' questions like this, but should respond in a friendly and cordial manner.

Mr. Shane Brackin, of Quality Construction, Danville, Virginia, came before the Board and stated that he had a question for the County Manager concerning the revised fees. Mr. Brackin asked which surrounding counties did he compare Caswell to and how did Caswell County compare on the revised fees. Mr. Earp, County Manager, answered that he reviewed the fee schedules for Person, Rockingham, Johnston, and Orange Counties and generally, the County is either in line or lower than all of the surrounding counties. Mr. Brackin stated that in talking with Rockingham County officials today and comparing their formula with Caswell County's formula, it appears that Caswell County's fees are higher than those of Rockingham County. Mr. Brackin added that he is referring to commercial construction total building cost. Mr. Brackin questioned why residential construction is charged according to square footage and commercial construction is charged by total job cost. Mr. Earp answered that this was in the set-up that he saw other counties charge. Mr. Brackin stated that he reviewed the proposed Ordinance and it looks fine, but the revised fees look out of line and it appears that some adjustments need to be made and some documentation is needed from surrounding counties.

Mr. Gary Smith, of 7458 Cherry Grove Road, came before the Board and stated that as far as obtaining engineers and architect's State license, they could adjust to this, but the Board needed to try to keep in mind what this is costing homeowners in Caswell County. Mr. Smith added that when there is extra cost, this is passed on to the customer, the homeowner. Mr. Smith stated that along with the engineer and architect's fee and increased building inspection fees, over a 20 year period at 6% interest, this can be a lot of money. Mr. Smith noted that one of his customers recently purchased a building permit which covered all four inspections and it cost \$882. Mr. Smith added that the square footage of the living area of the house was 3,200 square feet, but the same amount was charged for the basement, which made a total of 5,900 square feet. Mr. Smith added that the Board needed to consider the cost that is going back to the homeowners. Mr. Smith stated that he agrees that contractors need to get same day inspections, especially those jobs relating to weather control and cost. Mr. Smith added that he felt with two Inspectors that this could be done.

Mr. Ronnie Willis came before the Board and stated that he is a building contractor in the County. Mr. Willis added that under Section 2.5.C. the Building Inspector has 24 hours in which to come out and asked shouldn't there be a statute of limitations on how long they can take to come out. Mr. Willis stated that there is no limitation on when the Inspector has to be out there.

Ms. Thalia Frost of Pelham came before the Board and stated that it has taken her two and one-half years to get a permit straightened out so that she could continue construction

on one commercial white shell box. Ms. Frost complained about an incident in which she failed to obtain an inspection. Ms. Frost suggested that the Building Inspector report to the Board of Commissioners rather than the County Manager.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Hamlett moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis that the public hearing be closed. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Ward questioned if there is anything that could be done about a time frame as suggested by Mr. McFarling. The County Manager answered that this would be up to the Board. Upon questioning from Commissioner Ward, the County Manager answered that if changes are made, there would be no requirement for another public hearing. Commissioner Ward stated that he would like to see the Building Inspector include in the Ordinance that inspections would be made within a two hour period.

After further discussion, Commissioner Ward moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis to table the proposed Building Inspections Ordinance and Fee Schedule until the Board's August 2, 2004 meeting for further review. The motion carried unanimously.

(Commissioner Lucas left the meeting at this time).

PROGRESS ENERGY

Ms. Martha Thompson, Community Relations Manager with Progress Energy, came before the Board to update them on its activities. Ms. Thompson stated that Progress Energy is one of three utilities that serve Caswell County. Ms. Thompson asked if the County's needs are being served by Progress Energy and if there was anything that she could do. The County Manager thanked Ms. Thompson and Progress Energy for their help in the recent months while he was Interim Emergency Management Director. Commissioner Hamlett thanked Ms. Thompson for what Progress Energy has done in the Semora area.

PRESENTATION BY CASWELL COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Ms. Lib McPherson, President, Caswell County Historical Association, came before the Board to present plans for the Heritage Village and request advertising assistance. Ms. McPherson shared with the Board a Project Summary of a grant application that the Historical Association is presenting to the Golden Leaf Foundation. Ms. McPherson reported that in 1999 the Historical Association acquired their property debt-free as the result of a gift. Ms. McPherson stated that the Historical Association was founded originally to preserve all of the history of Caswell County and updated the Board on its recent activities. Ms. McPherson added that the Historical Association feels that as a result of owning this property, it should benefit the community. Ms. McPherson informed the Board that the Association has conducted some strategic planning to include Heritage Tourism. Ms. McPherson stated that the Historical Association has adopted a proposal to create a Heritage Village where the tobacco barn is now located, behind the Museum. Ms. McPherson added that they would recreate the property with outbuildings,

etc. as it would have been in the early 1800's. Ms. McPherson informed the Board of the plans that they propose for the property with the focus being on agriculture heritage. Ms. McPherson stated that she is asking for a Letter of Support and Endorsement from the Board of Commissioners stating that they see this as appropriate for the County and that it fits the County's heritage and is an opportunity for economic development based on Agri-Tourism, Economic Development, and Heritage Tourism. Commissioner Ward asked if a Letter of Support from the 21st Century Committee would also be helpful. Ms. McPherson answered that this would be helpful. Commissioner Ward commended Ms. McPherson for the work she has done in preparation of this grant application.

Ms. McPherson reported that she attended a meeting sponsored by Pace Communications, a company in Greensboro that publishes airline magazines. Ms. McPherson stated that she was extended an invitation to serve on a Steering Committee for a Piedmont Triad regional committee that was being formed to work with Pace Communications on a 32-64 page feature on the Piedmont Triad region that will be in the October issue of US Airways Magazine. Ms. McPherson added that this could be an opportunity for the County to promote economic development and tourism. Ms. McPherson informed the Board that one-third of a page would cost \$16,000 and in October there will be a 50% discount which would be an \$8,000 cost. Ms. McPherson added that there is an opportunity for the Board to join in on an ad for \$935 and informed the Board how the County would be displayed. Ms. McPherson noted that this would need to be done immediately. Ms. McPherson stated that if the County is too late in participating in this ad, the County could have a web presence.

After further discussion, Commissioner Hamlett moved, seconded by Commissioner that the County provide a Letter of Support and Endorsement for a Heritage Village and Park to be submitted in a grant application to the Golden Leaf Foundation. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Lucas absent.

The Board took no action on the request from Ms. McPherson for advertising funds.

CONSIDERATION OF SCRAP TIRE RECYCLING CONTRACT WITH CENTRAL CAROLINA HOLDINGS, L.L.C.

Mr. Jeff Earp, County Manager, reported that at the Board's March 15, 2004 meeting, it approved a Scrap Tire Contract with Central Carolina Holdings, L.L.C. Mr. Earp stated that at that time there was discussion as to who would deliver the tires to Central Carolina Holdings. Mr. Earp clarified that after talking with representatives of Central Carolina Holdings, it will be the County's responsibility to deliver the tires to them as it has in the past. Mr. Earp reported that as requested by the Board, he also asked Central Carolina Holdings if it would consider a three-year rather than a five-year contract and they agreed that they would enter into a three-year contract. After further discussion, Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Ward to approve the Scrap Tire Contract with Central Carolina Holdings, L.L.C. for a three-year period. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Lucas absent.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Jeff Earp, County Manager, reported that the tower clock located at the Historic Courthouse currently receives maintenance once a year by Mr. Eugene R. Volk. Mr. Earp informed the Board that this has been the practice since the Courthouse Renovation and Mr. Volk has been receiving \$300 for a semi-annual inspection, but there has been no formal contract. Mr. Earp presented a request from Mr. Volk for a formal contract at a cost of \$900 per year for semi-annual maintenance inspections of the clock tower located at the Historic Courthouse. Commissioner Hamlett moved, seconded by Commissioner Travis to approve a one-year contract with Mr. Eugene R. Volk at an annual cost of \$900 for semi-annual maintenance of the tower clock at the Historic Courthouse. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Lucas absent.

Mr. Earp presented a Lease for Real Property Agreement between Caswell County and the United States Department of Agriculture. Mr. Earp stated that the contract is for the lease of 1,911 square feet of office space to the Farm Service Agency in the Caswell County Agricultural Building at a rate of \$9.25 sq. ft., with a total annual rent of \$17,676. Mr. Earp added that the lease period would be July, 2004 to July, 2005 and is identical to the current contract. Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Ward to approve the Lease for Real Property Agreement between Caswell County and the United States Department of Agriculture as presented. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Lucas absent.

THE ADJOURNMENT

At 7:40 p.m. Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner Ward to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Lucas absent.

Wanda P. Smith
Clerk to the Board

M. O. Battle
Chairman
